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Summary record of the 63rd meeting
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Chairman: Mr. Abelian ..... (Armenia)
Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. Mselle

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The meeting was called to order at 5.05 p.m.

Agenda item 111: Financial reports and audited financial statements, and reports of the Board of Auditors (*continued*)

(a) United Nations (*continued*)

Peacekeeping operations

1. **Mr. Sulaiman** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that many proposals had been put forward during the informal consultations on the report of the Board of Auditors on the United Nations peacekeeping operations (A/53/5 (Vol. II)) but no consensus on the issue had been reached.

2. **The Chairman** suggested, in the light of the statement by the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic, that the Committee should recommend to the General Assembly that it should defer consideration of the issue to its fifty-fourth session.

3. *It was so decided.*

Agenda item 112: Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations (*continued*) (A/C.5/53/L.75)

Procurement reform

4. **Mr. Armitage** (Australia) said that, despite several sessions of informal consultations, no consensus had been reached on the question of procurement reform.

5. **The Chairman** suggested, in the light of the statement by the representative of Australia, that the Committee should recommend to the General Assembly that it should defer consideration of the question of procurement reform to its fifty-fourth session.

6. *It was so decided.*

7. **Mr. Stein** (Germany) speaking in explanation of position on behalf of the European Union and the associated countries Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Romania, said that the European Union had long attached great importance to the question of procurement reform, and had carefully scrutinized the performance of the Secretariat in that area, in particular, that of the Procurement Division. He welcomed the recent improvements made, and commended the efforts of the management and staff of the Division. He urged them to continue those efforts, noting that the efficiency of the procurement process also depended on other units of the Secretariat.

8. The European Union welcomed especially the success achieved in increasing opportunities for vendors from developing countries and countries with economies in transition to be awarded procurement contracts, as requested in earlier General Assembly resolutions. Conscious that progress in that area was a shared responsibility, some States members of the European Union had given financial support to Secretariat proposals aimed at broadening the vendor base. Efforts must continue to promote the widest possible participation in a fair, transparent and competitive procurement process.

9. It was regrettable that the Committee had failed to reach a consensus on a draft resolution on procurement reform and had thus foregone the chance to restrict the procurement opportunities of Member States in arrears, a long-standing demand of the European Union.

10. **Mr. Orr** (Canada) commended the substantial progress made by the new leadership of the Procurement Division in enhancing procurement procedures within the United Nations, and urged continuation of those efforts.

Draft decision A/C.5/53/L.75

11. **The Chairman** introduced draft decision A/C.5/53/L.75.

12. *Draft decision A/C.5/53/L.75 was adopted.*

Agenda item 113: Programme budget for the biennium 1998–1999 (*continued*)

Development Account (continued) (A/C.5/53/L.68)

Draft resolution A/C.5/53/L.68

13. **Mr. Kabir** (Bangladesh), introducing draft resolution A/C.5/53/L.68, said that, following informal consultations on the report of the Secretary-General on the utilization of the development dividend (A/53/374/Add.1), three proposals, projects F, G and H, had been approved. He urged the draft resolution's adoption by consensus.

14. With regard to the modalities for operating the Account, the positions of the members of the Committee remained far apart. It appeared that the General Assembly would have to defer consideration of the issue to its fifty-fourth session, although it was imperative that agreement should be reached before consideration of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000–2001.

15. *Draft resolution A/C.5/53/L.68 was adopted.*

16. **The Chairman** suggested, in the light of the statement by the representative of Bangladesh, that the Committee should recommend to the General Assembly that it should

defer consideration of the modalities for operating the Development Account to its fifty-fourth session, with the understanding that the modalities would be finalized prior to consideration of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000–2001.

17. *It was so decided.*

18. **Mr. Küntzle** (Germany), speaking in explanation of position on behalf of the European Union, said that it had supported the concept of the Development Account since its introduction as part of the Secretary-General's reform proposals. It therefore welcomed the approval of the three projects contained in the report of the Secretary-General on the utilization of the development dividend (A/53/374/Add.1). In order to regularize the operation of the Account, it would be necessary to establish a special multi-year account for supplementary development activities, as proposed in the report of the Secretary-General on the Development Account: modalities for operating the Account (A/53/945) and endorsed in the related report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (A/53/7/Add.12). It was deeply regrettable that no consensus on the matter had been reached, despite the submission during the informal consultations of a balanced and carefully worded draft resolution.

19. **Mr. Barnwell** (Guyana), speaking in explanation of position on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that his delegation had broadly supported the draft resolution on the modalities for operating the Development Account considered in informal consultations, and expressed regret that the Committee had been unable to reach a consensus thereon.

20. **Mr. Odaga Jalomayo** (Uganda), speaking in explanation of position, expressed concern that the Committee had approved the implementation of three projects to be funded from the Development Account before reaching agreement on the modalities for operating the Account. A dangerous precedent had been set, and serious difficulties could arise if the problem was not addressed. The modalities must therefore be determined at the General Assembly's fifty-fourth session before consideration of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000–2001.

Agenda item 143: Administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations (*continued*)

(a) Financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations (*continued*) (A/C.5/53/L.69)

Draft decision A/C.5/53/L.69

21. **Mr. Park Hae-yun** (Republic of Korea) introduced draft decision A/C.5/53/L.69, and expressed the hope that it would be adopted by consensus.

22. **The Chairman** said that in paragraph (a) the words "request the Secretary-General to" should be inserted after "*Decides* to". The revision, which had not been discussed in the informal consultations, had been suggested by the Secretariat in order to bring the text into line with previous decisions on similar subjects.

23. *Draft decision A/C.5/53/L.69, as orally revised was adopted.*

24. **Ms. Duschner** (Canada), speaking in explanation of position on behalf of the CANZ group said that the group had called for the convening of the Phase V Working Group on reimbursement of contingent-owned equipment in early 2000, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 49/233 A and its own view that there was a need to review rates of reimbursement and to address issues that arose as the Organization gained experience of the reformed procedures. She noted that the Committee had been informed by the Finance Management and Support Service of the Field Administration and Logistics Division that it would be ready to commence initial planning in mid-June with a view to convening the Working Group in the spring of 2000, subject to a decision by the General Assembly. That time-frame had been endorsed by the Advisory Committee. She therefore looked forward to the early convening of the Working Group.

25. **Mr. Sial** (Pakistan) expressed regret that the project plan and time-line stipulated in General Assembly resolution 49/233 A (annex) for reform of the procedures for determining reimbursement to troop-contributing countries for contingent-owned equipment had not been adhered to. He urged the Secretariat to make the necessary arrangements for the convening of the Phase V Working Group in early 2000, and requested that it should submit a comprehensive report on phase V in order to facilitate the Committee's consideration of the issue.

26. **Mr. Moktefi** (Algeria) said that his delegation had always stressed the need both to protect the interests of the Organization and to ensure equitable treatment for troop-contributing countries: the United Nations should not have

to bear any additional financial responsibility, but neither must the phenomenon of double payment continue. The timing of the convening of the Phase V Working Group would be determined by a decision of the General Assembly, not on the basis of requests by individual Member States. The activities of the Working Group must be subject to scrutiny by the Committee, as a subsidiary organ of the General Assembly, and by the competent expert bodies, including the Advisory Committee and the Board of Auditors. It was vital for all Member States to be able to participate fully in the Working Group so that their interests were fully reflected in its recommendations.

27. **Mr. Darwish** (Egypt) endorsed the position of the representative of Pakistan, and affirmed the importance that his delegation attached to the convening of the Phase V Working Group in early 2000.

28. **Ms. Buergo Rodríguez** (Cuba) said that the comments by members of the Committee, particularly the statement by the representative of Algeria, had contained a number of important points, which should be taken fully into account when the General Assembly resumed its consideration of the issue.

29. **Mr. Al-Hadid** (Jordan) said that his delegation attached great importance to the convening of the Phase V Working Group as early as possible in 2000.

Agenda item 145: Review of the implementation of General Assembly resolution 48/218 B (*continued*)

30. **Ms. Emerson** (Portugal) reported that no decision had been reached in informal consultations because basic conceptual differences between delegations had emerged. However, she was sure that only a little more time would have been needed for consensus to have been achieved.

31. **The Chairman** suggested that the Committee should recommend to the General Assembly that it should defer consideration of agenda item 145 to the main part of its fifty-fourth session.

32. *It was so decided.*

33. **Mr. Sulaiman** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that his delegation hoped that the Committee would not allow a decision on the item to remain outstanding because, while it attached great importance to the work of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS), it believed that that work required definition. In that connection he recalled his delegation's statement of position in the general debate on the item (A/C.5/53/SR.17, paras. 9–13).

34. **Mr. Stein** (Germany), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that the Union regretted that the review of OIOS called for in General Assembly resolution 48/218 B had not been finalized, but hoped that the conceptual differences between delegations would soon be reconciled.

35. **Mr. Darwish** (Egypt) expressed his delegation's regret at the lack of consensus on agenda item 145. The role of OIOS in assisting the Secretary-General in managing the Organization's human and financial resources so as to achieve optimum utilization and better performance was an extremely important one.

36. **Ms. Silot Bravo** (Cuba) said that she was convinced that the differences between delegations would be eliminated at the fifty-fourth session and that a resolution would be adopted which would contribute to a clearer definition of and an improvement in the work of OIOS.

37. **Mr. Jaremczuk** (Poland) said that his delegation aligned itself with the statement made by the representative of Germany on behalf of the European Union.

Agenda item 165: Joint Inspection Unit (*continued*)

38. **Mr. Sulaiman** (Syrian Arab Republic) reported that delegations had come close to reaching full agreement in informal consultations, with many paragraphs of a draft resolution adopted on a preliminary basis. However, disagreement had been expressed at the last moment and it had therefore been impossible to reach a consensus. Further consideration of the item should therefore be deferred to the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly.

39. **The Chairman** suggested that in the light of the statement just made the Committee should recommend to the General Assembly that it should defer consideration of the item to the main part of its fifty-fourth session.

40. *It was so decided.*

41. **Ms. Silot Bravo** (Cuba) expressed regret that a single delegation should have stood in the way of consensus on the draft resolution, effectively postponing further consideration, and that it should have done so in an attempt to impose conditionalities between the item under discussion and another. That attempt had not been helpful to the work of the Committee.

42. She hoped that a different spirit would prevail in future: imposing linkages that held some items hostage to the satisfaction of demands which related to other items under discussion should be foreign to the spirit and to the work of the Fifth Committee. Rather, items should be judged on their own merits, and in a spirit of respect and cooperation.

43. She expressed the hope that the new Bureau of the Committee, now that it was aware of the possibility of such "hostage" situations, would do its utmost to avoid any recurrence at the fifty-fourth session.

44. **Mr. Moktefi** (Algeria) agreed that linking approval of proposals under discussion to matters external to them set a poor precedent. For the sake of rationality and the proper conduct of the work of the Committee, such linkages should be avoided in future.

Agenda item 112: Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations (*continued*) (A/C.5/53/L.72)

Agenda item 119: Human resources management (*continued*) (A/C.5/53/L.72)

Draft resolution A/C.5/53/L.72

45. **Mr. Armitage** (Australia) introduced draft resolution A/C.5/53/L.72. In the antepenultimate line of the English text, a comma should be inserted after the word "negligence". Also, the comma and the word "and" following the word "measures" should be deleted.

46. He informed the Committee that the draft resolution had been adopted by consensus in informal consultations, and proposed that the Committee should do likewise.

47. *Draft resolution A/C.5/53/L.72, as orally revised, was adopted.*

Other matters

Car parking at Headquarters

48. **Mr. Niwa** (Assistant Secretary-General for Central Support Services) said that he was perplexed by the complaint made by the representative of Syria at a previous meeting about non-diplomatic cars taking parking spaces reserved for diplomats. He accepted that parking space had been limited because of construction work, but his staff were reporting only one or two violations per day of the parking restrictions. Violators were fined $10. He recalled that some Permanent Missions had opted not to use diplomatic plates but were nevertheless entitled to park in the restricted area.

49. **Mr. Sulaiman** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that even taking vehicles of Missions that did not use diplomatic plates into account, he believed that parking space for diplomats whose presence was required for meetings at Headquarters was being taken over by more than just one or two violators per day: the number was closer to four or five. Given that there was space for so few vehicles because of the ongoing construction work, space must be reserved for persons with a bona fide need to attend a meeting at Headquarters and not just for persons accredited to Missions. The problem was serious in that it affected attendance at meetings, and the Assistant Secretary-General's answer had not been satisfactory.

50. **Mr. Niwa** (Assistant Secretary-General for Central Support Services) assured the Committee that his answer had been given in good faith on the basis of information provided to him. He would investigate the situation in person and would consult the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic.

51. **Mr. Ahounou** (Côte d'Ivoire) complained that representatives who were attending meetings that continued until after midnight and therefore had a bona fide reason for being at Headquarters were nevertheless receiving parking tickets. He enquired what the correct response should be to such a ticket.

52. **Mr. Sulaiman** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that those who did the ticketing should be asked to check who was attending post-midnight meetings before they ticketed their cars; every effort should be made to distinguish between the cars of persons with a genuine need to be at Headquarters and those without such a need.

53. **Mr. Niwa** (Assistant Secretary-General for Central Support Services) said that the correct procedure was to return the parking ticket with an explanation of the circumstances, whereupon the fine would be voided. In ticketing vehicles left after midnight, his staff were merely doing their job.

Closure of North Lounge and its mezzanine coffee bar at Headquarters

54. **Mr. Lozinsky** (Russian Federation) requested clarification as to how long the refreshment facilities in the North Lounge would be closed for construction work and what arrangements had been made to compensate for the closure. He noted that no information concerning the closure had been provided officially.

55. **Mr. Niwa** (Assistant Secretary-General for Central Support Services) said that the construction work and closure would continue throughout the summer of 1999. He had inspected the South Lounge with a view to opening it up as a replacement but after seeking other opinions had decided that the South Lounge was too small, and was also unsuitable because of the proximity of the press and United Nations television camera for the Security Council stakeout. The hours of the Viennese Café in the first basement had been extended to compensate, and for the Security Council

coffee was being provided in the "quiet room" adjacent to the Council Chamber.

Completion of the work of the Fifth Committee at the second part of the resumed fifty-third session of the General Assembly

56. An exchange of courtesies followed in which **Mr. Sareva** (Finland), on behalf of the Western European and other States, **Mr. Barnwell** (Guyana), on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, **Mr. Kwok Fook Seng** (Singapore), on behalf of the Group of Asian States, **Mr. Herrera** (Mexico), **Mr. Saha** (India), **Ms. Cardoze** (Panama), **Mr. Sulaiman** (Syrian Arab Republic), on behalf of the Group of Arab States, **Mr. Yusuf** (United Republic of Tanzania), on behalf also of Uganda and Kenya, **Mr. Jaremczuk** (Poland), on behalf of the Group of Eastern European States and **Ms. Aragon** (Philippines), on behalf of the Group of Asian States, took part.

57. **The Chairman** thanked delegations for their support and cooperation in his efforts to foster consensus and avoid night and weekend meetings, expressed his gratitude to the secretary of the Committee and to the staff of the Secretariat and declared that the Fifth Committee had concluded its work at the second part of the resumed fifty-third session of the General Assembly.

The meeting rose at 6.45 p.m.